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MURAL PAINTINGS AT BOSTON

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of THE ARTIST:

The May-June number of THE ARTIST contains an article on the "Proposed Competition for Mural Paintings in the Massachusetts State-house," which is so absolutely barren of a knowledge of the facts relative to the hearing given by the Committee on State-house to the Boston Artists and their opponents as to render correction necessary.

In the first place, the writer of the article obtained her ideas from the account of the hearing as given by a reporter on the Boston *Evening Transcript*, and the following paragraph from that paper is given in full:

"The hearing was closed without further action, leaving the Artists, as they said, in the delicate position of feeling that they had been ignored, yet unable to take any further steps in the matter without danger of doing injustice to brother artists of unquestioned ability, and who have gone ahead with their designs in good faith."

Nothing could be further from the truth of what actually did happen than this statement, and while every newspaper in Boston gave a full and accurate account of the proceedings, the *Transcript's* version was so entirely erroneous as to render its statement absolutely worthless. The Committee of Artists petitioned the legislative committee having the matter in charge for a public hearing, their petition was granted and the Artists appeared, likewise Gen. Loring, Mrs. Sarah W. Whitman and one or two others. The supporters of Mr. Endicott also possessed the advantage of a legal representative, whose attempt at cross-questioning proved a failure.

The hearing was opened by the reading of the petition by the Clerk of the Committee on State-house, and the Artists were then called upon to present their case, which briefly was that they desired an open competition, and no cut and dried arrangement which would debar them from having anything to do with the proposed decorations. They did not ask that the competition be limited to Massachusetts artists, though they might well have done so, but they desired to secure the best possible results in the interests of the State, and therefore asked that the competition be thrown open to the artists of the country, taking care

to debar artists of American birth who have elected to expatriate themselves.

Gen. Loring and Mrs. Whitman spoke in opposition, and at the conclusion of Mrs. Whitman's remarks the committee unanimously requested the Artists to draw up a bill and present it to the committee.

This was a complete victory for the Artists and their position; therefore, the hearing was closed, not "without further action"; on the contrary. The Artists were left, not in a "delicate position," but in a victorious one. The bill was drawn up by the Artists themselves, cutting down the amount asked for by Mr. Endicott, namely, \$37,000, to \$25,000, presented to the legislative committee, adopted by that committee and reported to the Legislature.

This is a concise *resumé* of the entire proceedings. Mr. Endicott, on the statement made by the Chairman of the Committee on State-house, had no authority whatever to promise or negotiate with any artist, and the Committee of Boston Artists assured themselves that they stood upon perfectly honorable ground before they proceeded to try their case.

If the author of the article in THE ARTIST had taken pains to secure a copy of the bill she would not have written her essay on the subject of competition as related to mural painting, which takes what is presumed to be too much valuable space and is hardly worthy of serious comment.

WALTER GILMAN PAGE,

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BOOK REVIEWS.

ALPHABETS, OLD AND NEW: Containing over one hundred and fifty complete alphabets, thirty series of numerals, and numerous fac-similes of ancient dates, etc., for the use of craftsmen, with an introductory essay on "Art in the Alphabet." By LOUIS F. DAY (Charles Scribner's Sons).

This book, as the author explains, is intended to show the development of letter forms and the shape they took at different periods, and also to suggest the endless variations which may yet be played upon shapes more or less fixed for us by custom. Mr. Day